DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 126 CG 020 059

AUTHOR Norman, Nancy M.
TITLE Disincentives, Identities, and Smoking.
PUB DATE Mar 87
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association (33rd, Atlanta, GA, March 25-28, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beliefs; *Elementary School Students; Identification; Individual Characteristics; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Predictor Variables; Prevention; *Smoking; *Student Attitudes; *Student Behavior

ABSTRACT

When smoking decisions are understood in terms of the beliefs and attitudes which determine them, prevention programs can focus on changing these beliefs and attitudes. A study was conducted to measure students' attitudes and beliefs on the short-term health effects of smoking, on the social consequences of smoking, and on specific identities attained by smoking. The beliefs, values, intentions to smoke, and smoking status of students (N=2,650) in grades five through eight were assessed at one time and and again 2 weeks and 6 months later. Questionnaires were administered and a bogus pipeline technique was used to encourage valid self-reports of smoking status. The results revealed that attitude toward smoking and subjective norms accounted for a significant portion of the variance in inention to smoke. Attitude toward smoking was shown to be the best predictor of intention to smoke, intention to smoke in turn, was a significant predictor of smoking behavior. The number of friends one had who smoked and attitude toward smoking also predicted smoking behavior. Beliefs about the identities characteristic of a smoker were shown to influence smoking behavior indirectly through their influence on attitudes toward smoking. These findings have implications for prevention efforts. (NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED284126

DISINCENTIVES, IDENTITIES, AND SMOKING

by Nancy M. Norman
Old Dominion University

CG 020059

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Nancy M. Norman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The present research provides a test of the factors believed to affect smoking decisions among adolescents. With some modifications of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970) the author intends to demonstrate which specific beliefs and attitudes held by teens affect their decision to initiate smoking. When smoking decisions are understood in terms of the beliefs and attitudes which determine them, prevention programs can focus on changing these beliefs and attitudes to prevent intentions to smoke and actual smoking.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Behavior, attitude toward performing a behavior and subjective normative beliefs predict intentions to perform a behavior. In addition, intentions to perform the behavior predict the actual behavior. According to this theory, beliefs about the consequences of behavior effect attitudes toward the behavior. Hence, in terms of smoking behavior beliefs about the health and social consequences of smoking are determinants of attitudes toward smoking. In addition to social and health beliefs, however, my contention is that beliefs about the identities attained by smoking also effect smoking decisions. According to impression management theory (Tedeschi, et al. 1971) individuals may use particular tactics and strategies in order to present a particular image or identity to others. Adolescents can adopt smoking as a form of impression management designed to help them attain certain identities they see as desirable.

The purpose of the present research is to measure students'

beliefs and attitudes on the short term health effects of smoking, on the social consequences of smoking, and of specific identities attained by smoking. The significance of these factors in predicting attitudes toward smoking, intentions to smoke and smoking behavior can be determined. In order to test Ajzen & Fishbien's model, the amount of variance of intentions to smoke accounted for by their attitudinal and normative components will be determined. Secondly, the amount of variance in smoking behavior accounted for by intentions to smoke will also be evaluated. The utility of the identity factor in increasing the amount of variance accounted for in intentions and behavior over that accounted for by Ajzen and Fishbein's model will also be determined.

METHOD

Subjects. 2650 fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from seven school districts in the Albany County area served as research participants. Procedure. The procedure included assessment of students' beliefs, values, intentions to smoke and smoking status at three different points in time; T(0), T(1) which was 2 weeks after T(0), and T(2) which was six months after T(0). Testing Sessions. Testing sessions were conducted by trained reseachers from the American Lung Association. Students were told that the research was being conducted in order to understand why teens begin smoking and that in order to obtain this information, they would be asked to complete a questionnaire. Students were assured anonymity and confidentiality and were encouraged to answer honestly. A bogus pipeline technique was used to encourage valid self-reports of smoking status (Jones & Sigall, 1971).

RESULTS

The present investigation offered confirmation of one prediction proffered by Ajzen & Fishbein's theory of reasoned behavior and supported the contention proposed by impression management theory that the identity of a smoker affects a smoking decision. As predicted by a theory of reasoned action, attitude toward the act of smoking and subjective norms accounted for a significant portion of the variance in intentions to smoke, $R2=.39$, $p<.001$. Attitude toward smoking was shown to be the best predictor of intention to smoke, accounting for 13% of the unique variance in intentions. Intention to smoke was a significant predictor of smoking behavior. However, it was not the only predictor of behavior, as it is predicted to be according to a theory of reasoned action. The number of friends one has who smokes ($sr2=.06$) and attitude toward the act of smoking ($sr2=.04$) also predicted smoking behavior. Hence, attitudes toward smoking were shown to exert direct influence on smoking behavior without completely being mediated by intentions.

In order to test the IM hypothesis, that beliefs about the image of a smoker would significantly increase the amount of variance accounted for in intentions, standardized regression was performed. The amount of variance in intentions accounted for was not increased by addition of the IM factor. However, beliefs about the identities characteristic of a smoker were shown to influence smoking behavior indirectly through its influence on attitudes toward smoking. Standardized regression was employed to determine the amount of variance accounted for in attitudes toward smoking by beliefs about the health and social consequences of smoking (Ajzen and Fishbein's predictors) and by beliefs about the identity of a smoker (the hypothesized IM predictor). As can be seen by Table 1, beliefs about the image of a

smoker accounted for the most variance in attitudes.

In addition, post-hoc analyses showed that identity-related beliefs about smoking were found to differentiate between smokers and non-smokers. That is, teens who believed smokers had positive images and who indicated it was important to them to possess these images indicated significantly more smoking than teens who believed neither. Although not significant using Scheffe's Test, the former group also indicated more smoking than the other two groups; those who thought teens who smoked had positive identities but who did not want to possess them, and teens who valued these identities for themselves but did not believe smokers possessed them.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present investigation can offer sound recommendations about program content which should be used to update existing prevention programs. Beliefs about the identities attained by smoking may affect smoking decisions and should be addressed as part of a prevention program. A long-term prevention program designed to change beliefs about the image of a smoker and innoculate students against social pressure to smoke is the suggested technique for preventing smoking. High school students chosen to lead the peer-led discussions should be chosen according to the identities they present to others. These students should appear cool, independent, sexy, attractive to the opposite sex, mature, tough, and admired by friends. As role models, these students with socially desirable attributes can show that smoking is not a means for acquiring desired identities. Other means for acquiring these images can be the focus of discussion and role-play.

A theoretically interesting question from an impression management perspective includes the generalizability of the present

findings to other areas of research. Future research can explore the impact of identity-related beliefs on the attitudes towards other behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, athletic performance, scholastic achievement, etc. The ability to predict attitudes toward these behaviors, in addition to the behaviors themselves, may be improved by identifying the beliefs about the identities attained by performing the behavior.

Table 1

Standardized Regression of Four Component Model on Aact

Variables	Act (DV)	Image	Health	Social	B	Beta	sr2
Image	.47				.10	.39	.12
Social	.40	.46	-.24		.11	.18	.02
Health	-.26	-.15	-.24		-.11	-.11	.01
Impression mngement belief	.20	.15	-.07	.39	.46-003	.00	.003
					R2=.28**		
					R =.54		

**p <.001

Table 2

Mean Smoking Status by Group

GROUP	MEAN
Hi Image/Hi Importance	2.60a
Hi Image/lo Importance	2.25ab
lo Image/Hi Importance	1.94ab
lo Image/lo Importance	1.56b

* subscripts indicate differences significant at .05 level

References

Abelson, H., Fishburne, P., & Cisin, I.

The National Survey of Drug Abuse: 1977 Rockville, MD: National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M. The prediction of behavior from attitudinal and normative variables. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 1970, 6, 466-87.

Barton, J., Chassin, L., Presson, C. and Sherman, S. Social image factors as motivators of smoking initiation in early and middle adolescence. Child Development, 1982, 53, 1499-1511. 1, 245-276.

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service. Teenage smoking: National patterns of cigarette smoking, age 12 through 18 in 1972 and 1974. Washington, D.C.: D.H.E.W. Publication No. (NIH) 76-931, 1976.

Evans, R., Rozelle, R., Mittlemark, M., Hansen, W., Bane, A., and Havis, J. Deterring the Onset of Smoking in Children: Knowledge of Immediate Physiological Effects and Coping with Peer Pressure, Media Pressure, and Parent Modeling. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 1978, 8, 126-135.

Evans, R., Hansen, W. and Mittlemark, M. Increasing the validity of self-reports of behavior in a smoking in children investigation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 1977, 62, 521-23.

Evans, R., Henderson, P., Hill, P. and Raines, B. Smoking in children and adolescents: Psychosocial determinants and prevention strategies. In Norman A Krasnegor (ed.), The Behavioral Aspects of Smoking. NIDA Research Monograph 26, 1979.

Evans, R., Rozelle, R., Maxwell, S., Raines, B., Dill, C., and Guthrie, Tanya. Social Modeling Films to Deter Smoking in Adolescents: Results of a Three-Year Field Investigation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 1981, 66, 399-414.

Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1970. Jaccard, J. A theoretical analysis of selected factors important to health education strategies. Health Education Monographs, 1975 (Summer), 3 (2) 152-167.

Jones, E.E., & Sigall, H. The bogus pipeline: A new paradigm for measuring affect and attitude. Psychological Bulletin, 1971, 76, 923-938.

McAlister, A. Social-Psychological Approaches. In National Institute on Drug Abuse: Research Monograph Series, 1983, 47, 36-50.

McAlister, A., Perry, C., and Maccoby, N. Adolescent smoking: Onset and prevention. Pediatrics, 1979, 63, 650-658.

National Institute of Education. Teenage smoking immediate and long term patterns (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contract No. 400-79-0010. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979.

Schlenker, B.R. Attitudes as actions: social identity theory and consumer research. Advances in Consumer Research, 1978, 5, 352-359.

Tedeschi, J.T. and Norman, N. Social power, self-presentation, and the self. In B. Schlenker (Ed.), Self and Identity: Presentation in Social Life. New York: McGraw Hill, 1985.

Tedeschi, J.T., Schlenker, B.T., & Bonoma, T.V. Cognitive dissonance: Private ratiocination or public spectacle? American Psychologist, 1971, 26, 685-695.

U.S. Public Health Service: Smoking and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. PHS Publication No. 79-50066, 1979.